

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions and listings of the claims in the application.

Listing of the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) An internal combustion engine, comprising:
a crankcase having walls which define an interior volume for containing oil and
which define a cylinder;
a piston moveably positioned within the cylinder of the crankcase;
a cylinder head having a proximal end fastened to the crankcase, the cylinder head
extending laterally outward from the crankcase and terminating at a distal end;
a rocker arm cover, fastened to the distal end of the cylinder head, the rocker arm
cover defining a cavity therein which forms a valve box;
a drainback passage interconnecting the interior volume of the crankcase and the
valve box to enable the flow of fluid from the valve box to the interior volume of the
crankcase; and
a check valve, disposed within the drainback passage, for allowing the flow of fluid
from the valve box to the interior volume of the crankcase and preventing the flow of fluid
from the interior volume of the crankcase to the valve box.

2. (Original) An internal combustion engine, as recited in claim 1, wherein the
check valve comprises a reed valve.

3. (Original) An internal combustion engine, as recited in claim 1, wherein the
check valve comprises a check disk.

4. (Original) An internal combustion engine, as recited in claim 1, wherein the check valve comprises a ball valve.

5. (Original) An internal combustion engine, as recited in claim 1, wherein the drainback passage is formed as an integral part of the cylinder head and the crankcase.

6. (Currently Amended) An internal combustion engine, as recited in claim 1, wherein:

the cylinder head has a first bore formed therethrough extending from the distal end to the proximal end of the cylinder head;

~~the crankcase has a cylinder formed in one of the walls, the cylinder having~~ has a cylinder wall, integrally formed in the one wall of the crankcase; and having an interior surface that communicates with the interior volume of the crankcase and an exterior surface that engages the proximal end of the cylinder head; and

the cylinder wall has a second bore formed therethrough extending from the interior surface to the exterior surface, where it aligns with and couples to the cylinder head bore; wherein

the first bore and the second bore together define the drainback passage.

7. (Original) An internal combustion engine, as recited in claim 6, further comprising a head gasket disposed between the crankcase and the cylinder head, the head gasket having an aperture that is aligned with the first and second bores to allow the flow of fluid therethrough.

Claim 8 (Cancelled).

9. (Currently Amended) An internal combustion engine, as recited in claim [[8]]
10, wherein the check ball is formed of a fluorocarbon material.

10. (New) The internal combustion engine, as recited in claim 6, wherein the
check valve comprises:

a cavity in the exterior surface of the cylinder wall at one end of the second bore; and
a check ball is disposed within the cavity;

wherein the check ball seats against the bore at the proximal end of the cylinder
head to prevent the flow of fluid from the interior volume of the crankcase to the valve box
when there is high pressure present within the crankcase or when the engine is operated at
an elevated angle.

11. (New) The internal combustion engine, as recited in claim 1, wherein the
check valve is configured so that when the crankcase is tipped beyond a predetermined
angle, the check valve substantially prevents the flow of fluid from the interior volume of
the crankcase to the valve box regardless of a position of the piston.

12. (New) The internal combustion engine, as recited in claim 1, wherein the
check valve allows and prevents the flow of fluid in the drainback passage in response to
pressure in the crankcase.